

KLAMATH FALLS RESOURCE AREA THIRD YEAR PLAN EVALUATION

Introduction

This document and the associated Supporting Document constitute the third year plan evaluation of the Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP). This evaluation contains general background information regarding plan evaluations and process, and a specific report of the Klamath Falls Resource Area RMP evaluation, and related findings. The Supporting Document related to the evaluation is available at the Klamath Falls Field Office.

Background

Third Year Plan Evaluation Explanation

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-9) require the monitoring and evaluation of Resource Management Plans at appropriate intervals. The western Oregon RMPs established that they would be evaluated at the end of every third year after implementation begins. The purpose of the evaluations is to determine whether there is sufficient cause to warrant amendment or revision of the plan.

The evaluation includes an assessment of monitoring records and implementation experience to determine if the plan's objectives are being met or are likely to be met, and whether changed circumstances or new information has so altered the levels or methods of activities or the expected impacts that the environmental consequences of the plan may be substantively different than those anticipated in the RMP Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The third year plan evaluation will conclude in a finding as to whether there is sufficient cause to warrant an amendment or revision of the plan.

If a plan evaluation concludes that the RMP objectives are not achievable, a plan amendment or revision would be initiated. An amendment or revision may include changes of the RMP objectives, management action/direction or land use allocations, or a combination of these. If a plan evaluation concludes that the environmental consequences are substantively different than those anticipated in the RMP FEIS a variety of corrective actions may be considered to address the situation. In some instances the situation may be corrected by modifying implementation within the existing management action/direction of the RMP. If the situation cannot be corrected within existing management action/direction, an amendment would be necessary. If a plan evaluation concludes that objectives are being achieved and environmental consequences are similar to those anticipated in the RMP FEIS, but that minor refinements are needed to more closely match decisions and assumptions of the RMP, such actions may be accomplished through plan maintenance.

The third year plan evaluation is not intended to re-analyze information that was previously considered in the RMP. The third year plan evaluation considers only new information, changed circumstances, monitoring information, or implementation experience as of September 30, 1998 that would substantively alter RMP conclusions.

Plan Amendment, Plan Revision, Plan Maintenance

A plan amendment is a process that changes part of a RMP and results either in a change in the scope of resource uses, or a change in the terms, conditions and decisions of the approved plan (43 CFR 1610.5-5). A plan amendment is made and evaluated through either an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. A plan revision is required when the entire plan or major portions of the plan would be changed (43 CFR 1610.5-6). A plan revision would always be analyzed in an environmental impact statement. The amendment or revision process follows the same procedure required for the preparation and approval of a RMP. Plan maintenance may be used to refine a RMP (43 CFR 1610.5-4). Maintenance does not result in the expansion in the scope of resource uses or restrictions, or change the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved plan. Maintenance does not require the preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement nor does it follow the planning procedures for preparation and approval of a RMP.

Public Involvement

The plan evaluation process for the Klamath Falls Resource Area and the western Oregon BLM districts was initiated early in 1998 with a broad public outreach effort at the state and local levels. Outreach efforts included a *Federal Register* notice, news releases, information in District mailings, discussions with the Provincial Advisory Committee, and the offer of briefings to interest groups requesting supplemental information. Comments received through the public outreach effort were used by district and State Office staff as an aid in issue identification regarding the third year plan evaluations. The evaluations relied heavily on the *1998 Annual Program Summary and Monitoring Report* (APS) which had been distributed to the public. Projects implemented under the RMP will continue to undergo site-specific analysis and continue to meet applicable regulatory requirements for public participation.

The evaluation is considered an assessment process. It is not a final agency action or decision subject to administrative review. The plan evaluation itself does not allocate or re-allocate lands or resources or approve changes in programs, projects or policies. Such changes would be implemented through RMP amendments or revisions which would be subject to public review, comment, environmental analysis, and protest and appeal.

Western Oregon BLM Districts RMP Plan Evaluation Process

Oregon State Office staff conducted the plan evaluation for the Klamath Resource Area and the western Oregon BLM districts. The Oregon State Director is the responsible official for the plan evaluation findings.

District personnel were interviewed, usually in an interdisciplinary setting, to generate the most useful exchange of information, ideas and perspectives. District line managers participated in key sessions. The 1998 APS, which contained summary information for the first three years of plan implementation, was a major source of information for most programs or issues. Other information used in the evaluation is contained in the Supporting Document for this evaluation. Given the extensive amount of documented implementation monitoring, no field reviews were necessary.

To ensure efficient coverage of all relevant topics, the evaluation made use of two parallel processes, one for biological resources and another for non-biological resources. Non-biological resources were evaluated by a State Office team visiting each western Oregon district. The State Office Team developed draft evaluations which were sent to the districts for review and comment. The State Office team then finalized these non-biological resource evaluations.

The review of biological resources and Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) topics were conducted using a multi-district meeting format. An initial meeting at the Oregon State Office was held in which approximately 60 district and state office managers and staff met to present and discuss information regarding RMP progress and implementation. Issues and topics were further analyzed and discussed in a subsequent series of multi-district meetings. The State Office Team used the information from these meetings, from program summaries, monitoring reports, and interaction with district staff to finalize the district plan evaluation for biological resources.

Although each district RMP was evaluated individually, all six western Oregon RMP evaluations (Salem, Eugene, Coos Bay, Roseburg, Medford, Klamath Falls) were conducted concurrently. The concurrent evaluation of the six RMPs facilitated the consideration of broad issues to determine if they were reasonably consistent with RMP decisions, conclusions and anticipated effects.

The supporting record, evaluation, and findings that have resulted from this process reflect information and circumstances relevant to the third year plan evaluation period which ended September 1998. Circumstances since 1998 such as the Survey and Manage EIS and ongoing litigation have delayed the completion and release of this plan evaluation. Although the third year plan evaluation is only relevant to information and circumstances prior to the end of fiscal year 1998, circumstances which have continued to evolve since that time will be addressed in subsequent plan evaluations.

Klamath Falls Resource Area Third Year Plan Evaluation

The analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the State Office Team involved an examination of over 50 different resources, programs, policies and requirements of the Klamath Falls RMP. Variations in implementation from RMP assumed levels of activities were examined. The individual analyses of the various Klamath Falls Resource Area resources and programs are included in the Supporting Document. The analyses include conclusions and

recommendations by the State Office team regarding the consistency of implementation with RMP management action/direction, assumptions, conclusions and anticipated effects. The conclusions and recommendations by the State Office team provide the basis for the finding by the State Director as to whether a plan amendment or revision is warranted.

The State Office Team found that for most district programs and resources there was no variation or change from RMP management action/direction, assumptions and conclusions that warranted adjustments in district implementation of the RMP. However, there were some programs or program elements for which the State Office staff made recommendations to further improve compliance and implementation even though they were generally in compliance with RMP management action/direction, assumptions and conclusions. The recommendations involve relatively minor adjustments to implementation that can be accomplished within existing RMP management action/direction and would not require an amendment to the RMP. In some instances, the State Office team recommended that the district continue to closely monitor or study implementation trends of various programs so that they may be further analyzed in subsequent evaluations. The full program narratives are contained in the Supporting Document.

The allowable sale quantity has been reevaluated as part of this plan evaluation to incorporate the results of watershed analyses, monitoring, further inventory, and site-specific, watershed specific or province-level decisions. The allowable sale quantity in the Klamath Falls Resource Area RMP ROD was described as BLM's best assessment of the average amount of timber likely to be sold and awarded annually in the planning area over the life of the plan (Klamath Falls Resource Area RMP ROD pg. 56). Based on the information available from this evaluation of the RMP which included information through the end of Fiscal Year 1998, there is no indication that the Klamath Falls Resource Area allowable sale quantity should be changed.

The conclusion for all programs and resources by the State Office team was that the RMP objectives are being met or are likely to be met, that there are no changed circumstances or new information that indicate that the expected environmental consequences of the plan may be substantively different than those anticipated in the RMP FEIS. The rationale for these conclusions is the overall consistency of the programs with RMP management action/direction, RMP assumptions and RMP modeling as evidenced by the district annual program summaries and monitoring reports, district records, and interdisciplinary and individual interviews with district personnel during the plan evaluation.

Specific discussions of individual programs and additional detail pertaining to the rationale and evidence for these conclusions may be found in the Supporting Document for this plan evaluation.

Klamath Falls Resource Area Third Year Plan Evaluation Findings

Based on this plan evaluation which included information through Fiscal Year 1998, I find that the Klamath Falls Resource Area RMP goals and objectives are being met or are likely to be met, and that the environmental consequences of the plan are similar to those anticipated in the RMP FEIS and that there is no new information, as of September 30, 1998, that would substantively alter the RMP conclusions. Therefore a plan amendment or plan revision of the Klamath Falls Resource Area RMP is not warranted. This document meets the requirements for a plan evaluation as provided in 43 CFR 1610.4-9.


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July 31, 2001
Date